Seminar for Officials of Rural Radios of the countries participating in the Onchocerciasis Control Programme
Ouagadougou 4-6 May 1977

DOC/9
Original: English

UPPER REGION AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (URADEP)

Initial experiences in implementing
the Upper Region Agricultural Development Programme

Dr A. O. Abudu
There are two principal objectives of the Ghana Upper Region Agricultural Development Programme. The first of these is to increase agricultural production and, therefore, the incomes of the farmers. The second objective is to establish a permanent and efficient system for the supply of services to the farmers. In order to accomplish these twin goals, the Programme will, among other measures, have to redefine the role of agricultural service, intensify extension work for crop and animal production, improve human nutrition, develop the required physical infrastructure, devise a strategy and implement measures to control the rapid rate of soil erosion in the Region and develop specialized institutions to service the commercial and financial requirements of the farmers.

The first five years, 1976/77 – 1980/81, characterized as the investment period, will involve the Programme which comprises:

(1) **Farm Development**

(a) Establish at a rate of about 30 a year, 90 service centres, to provide improved extension services to small farmers and management advice to a relatively few larger farmers. Each Service Centre is expected to serve about 1, 300 families.

(b) Provide farm inputs, including insecticides, seed dressing improved seeds, fertilisers, spare parts, farm equipment, oxen, etc., for cash or seasonal deferred payments as well as medium and long term loans, all in the direction of increasing the agricultural production on about 108,000 hectares of land, i.e., about 30% of total arable land currently under cultivation for such crops as millet, tall and dwarf sorghum, maize, groundnuts, cotton, rice, cowpeas, and tomatoes.

(c) Provide improved onfarm grain storage.

(d) Provide better animal health services and improved animal husbandry and establish ten small ranches, each of about 2,000 hectares, for local livestock owners.

(e) Develop seven applied research and demonstration units together with an associated seed multiplication programme.

(f) Establish a pilot functional literacy scheme.

(g) Expand the facilities of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation through a radio network and regional studios to broadcast in three of the most important languages of the Region.

(h) Improve human nutrition and health through agricultural extension services, the functional literacy programme and radio services.

(i) Provide inservice training for the Programme's staff both in the Region and through travel grants for visits to selected projects and schemes for specialized management training outside Ghana.
(2) **Physical Infrastructure**

(a) Construct about 120 new small dams and rehabilitate about 100 existing dams together with the associated structural works to enable the development of dry season gardening, fruit tree nurseries and fish culturing. These dams will provide water for livestock and assist in water conservation.

(b) Develop soil conservation measures to protect the catchment areas of the dams and some 160,000 hectares of farm land, ie., about 30% of total arable land.

(c) Construct 700 village wells.

(d) Construct stores and offices at farm service centres, district and regional project offices and the houses for the staff of the Programme.

(e) Provide vehicles and other equipment.

(f) Construct two cotton ginneries.

(3) **Institutional Support**

(a) Establish the Upper Region Agricultural Development Programme Management Unit (URADPU) which will be responsible for implementing the Programme. The implementation of the Programme includes the administration of all the services of the Ministry of Agriculture within the Upper Region.

(b) Establish the Farmers Services Company (UR) Ltd., a limited liability company which will be responsible for the input delivery aspect of the Programme.

(c) Strengthen the regional branch of the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB).

(d) Strengthen the Upper Regional Development Corporation (URDCCO), particularly its transport and wholesale divisions.

(4) **Development Planning**

Establish, under the direct control of the Programme, a special Onchocerciasis Survey Unit to prepare, in consultation with the Coordinating Committee of the National Onchocerciasis Programme of Ghana, a Ten Year Development Plan and feasibility studies for investment projects for areas freed from onchocerciasis in the Upper and Northern Regions of Ghana.

The details of what I have numerated so far are available in a more lengthy document which has already been circulated or, at any rate, is with the Oncho Programme here in Ouagadougou. In order to undertake this massive Programme, the total financing available is the equivalent of about $33 million or about £55 million. Whichever way one may look at it, this is a massive programme. The one million individuals resident in the Upper Region, about 10% of the population of Ghana, the Government of Ghana and the other main sources of funds, mainly loan funds, for implementing the Programme: the World Bank (38%) and Britain (20%), are looking forward to the success of this endeavour. Indeed, it is not
too far fetched to speculate that even the gods overseeing the almost 27,300 km² which make up the Upper Region, about 12% of the 235,000 km² which comprise Ghana, have the greatest goodwill toward the success of the Ghana Upper Region Agricultural Development Programme.

Between the latter part of 1974 when the Programme was first identified by a World Bank mission and right this moment in 1977, there have been several changes in the economic circumstances within Ghana and the world outside. Meanwhile, those of us who are now charged with implementing the Programme had nothing to contribute at any point during which it was fashioned. It is these existing and unfolding factors which are the basis of the sort of problems which we are experiencing in implementing the Programme. I shall now undertake a very brief examination of a few of these problems. Obviously, it is too early in the Programme's implementation to have experienced more than just a minute fraction of these problems.

From the information I have furnished so far, the programme is a massive one. Although the World Bank talks and writes about the "Project", it is preferable to refer to it as the "Programme". It is a programme in the sense that there are numerous projects and sub-projects which together make up the package. The field we are covering and its complexity and the various measures we have to undertake to get the whole business on the right course — this is too complex to be termed a project.

Now that a whole new team is charged with the implementation of the Programme, and as the various individuals, each of them expert and experienced in their own right, are being assembled, we are beginning to see that some of the "projects" within the programme have been seriously under-subscribed both in the components needed for the job and in the funds allocated. As members of our team examine their respective responsibilities for executing the programme, we simultaneously explore the means for re-shaping the specific projects or sub-projects or find ways in which we can stretch the funds as much as this is feasible and consistent with efficiency. A good proportion of the problem arises because of the rate of price inflation which has taken place both within Ghana and outside. For example, the estimates which were made for our buildings are now 50% of the cost of putting up those buildings. Within the two years, building costs have doubled. In this regard either elements of the programme have to be scaled down or additional sources of funds have to be located if the elements of the package should remain as was originally provided. It is in this regard that we have been holding discussions with officials of the Netherlands Government and Dutch institutions for assistance in the extension communication and training aspects of the Programme because what was provided within the Programme cannot do an effective job.

One critical area is the recruitment of high level staff from abroad as provided for the Programme. Our top level staff come from two sources: Those to be recruited through World Bank channels and those to be obtained under a technical assistance agreement signed between the Governments of Ghana and the United Kingdom. For the Programme, a majority of these individuals, about 19 of them comprising about 80% of the potential total of expatriate staff are being recruited through the British Ministry of Overseas Development in London. Top level and highly competent staff of this calibre are not easy to come by. The recruitment of this level of staff began around the middle of 1976 or even later. Since officials of the British ODM were involved all along, since
early 1975, in the appraisal missions for the Programme, one would have expected that, simultaneously, some organs within the British DBM would have been surveying the terrain in order to prepare tentative lists of likely specialists for the Upper Region Agricultural Development Programme (URADEP).

A list of candidates as I am suggesting would indicate when they are most likely to terminate their current jobs and any other observations which could influence their transition to the new responsibilities in the URADEP. To the extent that these types of individuals are hard to come by, some of them might have to be hired weeks or even months before they are actually required as long as there were the necessary indications that the URADEP was going to be implemented. These specialists hired earlier than the date they would be required for the new responsibilities could spend some time preparing themselves so that they would be ready to get onto the job as soon as the signals are clear. As the situation developed, some of the most critical individuals required by URADEP were not the first to be available. Right at the moment there is one such position, that of Senior Mechanical Engineer which has yet to be filled. Of course, as the filling of that position gets delayed, the whole issue of establishing necessary workshops, maintaining the Programme's vehicles, preparing tender documents for earth-moving and other heavy duty equipment for the dam construction and dam rehabilitation get delayed. Therefore, to the extent that each of the various pieces of the Programme are meant to be mutually reinforcing, its implementation suffers.

Getting a programme, such as URADEP, off the ground requires the type of coordination in any army that is engaged in a war. This coordination involves not only what we do within the Programme itself. Of greater importance is what happens in the various Government Ministries, Departments and organs each of whose spheres of influence affect the content and course of the total Programme of agricultural and, indeed, rural development. In this initial phase, there are bound to be lapses in the coordination and cooperative effort required to implement the Programme. This is to be expected and will diminish, but can never be eliminated, as more understanding is generated regarding the various aspects of URADEP and as more and more of the various officials develop a greater appreciation of their role in the whole scheme and as the impact of URADEP's activities get increasingly felt by the farmers and officials of the numerous government and private organs.

Ideally, on the ground in the Upper Region, there ought to have been enough dwelling houses of the most desirable type ready and fully furnished for the expatriate personnel to walk into and set up reasonably decent homes almost immediately they enter the Region. If such buildings, preferably of the bungalow type, were built, our current experience of having to hurriedly get some measure of accommodation would have been unnecessary. The amount of unnecessary but avoidable pioneering work would have been greatly reduced. A lot more of the energies and time of the Project Manager and the initially assembled top level staff would then have been channelled into more productive use for implementing the aspects of the Programme which really matter: those which directly affect the fortunes of the farmers in the Region.
On a more domestic level, one which cannot be influenced by the content nor the responsibilities of the Programme, one can seriously consider the effect on the expatriate staff of their own domestic affairs. Whether a staff member is able to work efficiently or productively depends upon whether his wife is happy. Too many variables enter into this aspect of human psychology. In these modern times, the pioneering spirit of bygone days is no longer with many of us. Therefore, I am not surprised when some expatriate staff, recruited and posted to help a developing country develop, arrive on the scene and expect conditions of living which one can associate only with highly developed economies. One method of easing this particular problem is to present as realistic a picture of the prospective environment to the specialist when he is being briefed about the nature of the new job for which he is being recruited. I think that it is absolutely important to have as many elements of his family, at least, his wife, involved in the interview or briefing sessions. Getting prospective staff members to visit the project or programme area and to see conditions for themselves and as part of their briefing, although it is the ideal thing to do, is too costly to be seriously contemplated. However, briefing sessions should employ enough audio-visual aids and an assortment of individuals whose personal familiarity with the project or programme area can present their peculiar perspectives to the candidate.

In all of this exposition, no mention has been made of the farmer for whom the URADEP was fashioned. This omission is deliberate because we have yet to get more involved with him in our implementation of the Programme. Some phases of the implementation have already been begun. However, we shall require a bit more time and increased exposure in the field by the new staff, the gradually reoriented old staff of the former Ministry of Agriculture which has now all been absorbed by the URADEP, and the additional staff yet to be recruited, before I can correctly present problems in the field. The monitoring and evaluation wing of the URADEP will be established within the next couple of months and the relevant specialist employed to put that department in order. Of course, meanwhile, we use our own methods of monitoring to guide us.

I do not wish to take too much of your time in an endless exposition of problems in getting a project such as the URADEP off the ground. There is the other side, the virtues of programme of this scope, impact and hope, to which the summary presented earlier hardly does any justice. However, the lessons which can, rather very preliminarily be presented at this stage, as I have attempted to do so far, will change as the Programme implementation unfolds.

Assibi O Abudu (Dr)
Manager/URADEP

23rd April, 1977